

Cy Whittaker's Place

By JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

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SYNOPSIS.

Cyrus Heman Atkins wants to buy Cy Whittaker's place. Cy unexpectedly returns to his boyhood home. Every one in Bayport venerates and fears Atkins except Cy. Atkins opposes the selection of Miss Phoebe Dawes as teacher.

Cy champions Phoebe Dawes against Atkins, and she is elected teacher. Cy engages Mrs. Beasley as housekeeper. Cy discharges Mrs. Beasley. Emily Richards Thomas, aged eight, arrives at Cy's place.

She is an orphan and has come to live with him, although he did not invite her to do so.

Cy is furious, but he grows fond of her and keeps her. He nicknames her "Boss'n," and she learns to love him.

Miss Phoebe Dawes and Captain Cy save Emily from an ugly cow. The captain admires the teacher.

Captain Cy, to help Phoebe, decides to run as a candidate for membership on the school committee.

"We—we didn't know you had company, Whit," said Asaph. "We been up to Simmons', and Alpheus said you was thin and peaked and looked sick. Said you bought sass'prilla and all kind of truck. He was afraid you had fever and was out of your head, cruisin' round in the rain with no umbrella. The gang weren't talkin' of nothin' else, so me and Bailey thought we'd come right down."

"That's kind of you, I'm sure. Take your things off and set down. No, I'm sorry to disappoint Smalley and the rest, but I'm able to be up and—er—make my own bed, thank you. So Alpheus thought I looked thin, hey? Well, if I had to live on that soup he sold me I'd be thinner'n I am now. You tell him that canned hot water is all right if you like it, but it seems a shame to put mud in it. It only changes the color and don't help the taste."

Mr. Bangs, who was still staring at Emily, now ventured a remark.

"Is that a relation of yours, Cy?" he asked.

"That? Oh! Well, no, not exactly. And yet I don't know but she is. Fellers, this is Emmie Thomas. Can't you shake hands, Emmie?"

The child rose, laid down the magazine, which was opened at the colored picture of a group of ladies in crinoline and chignons, and, going across the room, extended a hand to Mr. Tiddit.

"Why—er—how d'ye do? I'm pretty smart, thank you. How's yourself?"

"I'm better now. I guess the sass'parilla was good for me."

"Twasn't the sass'prilla," observed the captain with conviction. "Twas the 'Arabian balm.' Ma always cured me with it, and there's nothin' finer."

"But what in time?" began Bailey. Captain Cy glanced at the child and then at the clock.

"Don't you think you'd better turn in now, Emmie?" he said hastily, cutting off the remainder of the Bangs query. "It's after 8, and when I was little I was abed afore that."

Emily obediently turned, gathered up the Lady's Books and replaced them in the closet. Then she went to the dining room and came back with a hand lamp.

"Good night," she said, addressing the visitors. Then, coming close to the captain, she put her face up for a kiss.

As Bailey told Asaph afterward, Captain Cy blushed until the ends of the red lapped over at the nape of his neck. However, he bent and kissed the rosy lips and then quickly brushed his own with his hand.

"Yes, yes," he stammered. "Well—er—good night. Pleasant dreams to you. See you in the mornin'."

The girl paused at the chamber door. "You won't have to unbutton my waist now," she said. "This is my other one, and it ain't that kind."

The door closed. The captain, led without looking at his friends, the way to the dining room.

"Come on out here," he whispered. "We can talk better here."

Naturally they wanted to know all about the girl, who she was and where she came from. Captain Cy told as much of the history of the affair as he thought necessary.

"Poor young one!" he concluded. "She landed on me in the rain, soppin' wet and ha't sick. I couldn't turn her out then—nobody could. Course it's an everlastin' outrage on me and the cheekiest thing I ever heard of. But what could I do? I was fixed a good deal like an English feller by the name of Gatenby that I used to know in South America. He woke up in the middle of the night and found a boa constrictor curled on the foot of his bed. Next day, when a crowd of us happened in, there was Gatenby, white as a sheet, startin' down at the snake and it sound asleep. 'I didn't invite him,' he says, 'but he looked so bloomin' comf'able I didn't the heart to disturb him.' Same way with me. The child seemed so comf'able here I ain't had the heart to disturb her—yet."

"But she said she was goin' to stay," put in Bailey. "You ain't goin' to keep her, are you?"

The captain's indignation was intense.

"Who! Me?" he snorted. "What do you think I am? I ain't runnin' an orphan asylum. No, sir! I'll keep the

young one a day or so or maybe a week, and then I'll pack her off to Betsy Howes. I ain't so soft as they think I am. I'll show 'em!"

Mr. Tiddit looked thoughtful. "She's a kind of cute little girl, ain't she?" he observed.

Captain Cy's frown vanished, and a smile took its place.

"That's so," he chuckled. "She is—now that's a fact. I don't know's I ever saw a cuter."

The girl stayed on at the Whittaker place and grew to be more and more a part of it. At the end of the second week Captain Cy began calling her "Boss'n."

"A boss'n's a mighty handy man aboard ship," he explained. "And you're so handy here that it fits in first rate. And, besides, it sounds so natural. My dad called me Bos'n when I was little."

Emily accepted the title complacently. She was quite contented to be called almost anything so long as she was permitted to stay with her new friend. Already the boss'n had taken charge of the deck and the rest of the ship's company. Captain Cy and Lonesome, the cat, obeyed her orders.

On the second Sunday morning after her arrival Bos'n suggested that she and Captain Cy go to church.

"Mother and I always went at home," she said. "And Auntie Oliver used to say meeting was a good thing for those that needed it."

"Think I need it, do you?" asked the captain, who in shirt sleeves and slippers had prepared for a quiet forenoon with his pipe and the Boston Transcript.

"I don't know, sir. I heard what you said when Lonesome ate up the steak, and I thought maybe you hadn't been for a long time. I guess churches are different in South America."

So they went to church and sat in the old Whittaker pew. The captain had been there once before, when he first returned to Bayport, but the sermon was more somnolent than edifying, and he hadn't repeated the experience. The pair attracted much attention. Fragments of a conversation heard by Captain Cy as they emerged into the vestibule had momentous consequences.

"Kind of a pretty child, ain't she?" commented Mrs. Eben Salters, patting her false front into place under the eaves of her Sunday bonnet.

"Pretty enough in the face," sniffed Mrs. Tad Simpson, who was wearing her black silk for the first time since its third making over. "Pretty enough that way, I s'pose. But, my land, look at the way she's rigged—old dress, darned and patched up and all outgrown. If I had Cy Whittaker's money I'd be ashamed to have a relation of mine come to meetin' that way. Even if her folks was poorer'n Job's ox I'd spend a little on my own account and trust to gettin' it back some time. I'd have some care for my own self respect. Look at Alicia Atkins. See how nice she looks. Them feathers on her hat must have cost somethin', I bet you. Howdy do, Licia, dear? When's your pa comin' home?"

The Honorable Heman had left town on a business trip to the south. Alicia was accompanied by the Atkins housekeeper and, as usual, was garbed regardless of expense.

Mrs. Salters smiled sweetly upon the Atkins heir and then added in a church whisper: "Don't she look sweet? I agree with you, Sarah; it is strange how Captain Whittaker lets his little niece go. And him rich!"

"Niece?" repeated Mrs. Simpson eagerly. "Who said 'twas his niece? I heard 'twas a child he'd adopted out of a home. There's all sorts of queer yarns about it—Oh, good mornin', Cap'n Cyrus! How do you do?"

The captain grunted an answer to the effect that he was bearing up pretty well, considering. There was a scowl on his face and he spoke little as, holding Emily by the hand, he led the way home. That evening he dropped in at the perfect boarding house and begged to know if Mrs. Bangs had any "fashion books" around that she didn't want.

"I mean—er—magazines with pictures of women's duds in 'em," he stammered in explanation. "Boss'n likes to look at 'em. She's great on fashion books, Bos'n is."

Keturah got together a half dozen numbers of the Home Dressmaker and other periodicals of a similar nature. The captain took them under his arm and departed, whispering to Mr. Tiddit as he passed the latter in the hall:

"Come up by and by, Ase. I want to talk to you. Bring Bailey along, if you can do it without startin' divorce proceedings."

Later, when the trio gathered in the Whittaker sitting room, Captain Cy produced the "fashion books" and spoke concerning them.

"You see," he said, "I—I've been thinkin' that Bos'n—Emily, that is—wasn't rigged exactly the way she ought to be. Have you fellers noticed it?"

His friends seemed surprised. Neither was ready with an immediate answer, so the captain went on:

"Course I don't mean she ain't got canvas enough to cover her spars," he explained, "but what she has got has seen considerable weather, and it seemed to me 'twas pretty nigh time to haul her into drydock and refit. That's why I borrowed these magazines of Keturah. I've been lookin' them over, and there seems to be plenty of riggin' for small craft. The only thing I don't know what's the right cut for her build. Bailey, you're a married man. You ought to know somethin' about women's clothes. What do you think of this, now?"

He opened one of the magazines and pointed to the picture of a young girl, with a waspy waist and lilliputian

feet, who, arrayed in flounces and furberlows, was toddling gingerly down a flight of marble steps. She carried a parasol in one hand, and the other held the end of a chain to which a long haired dog was attached.

The town clerk and his companion inspected the young lady with deliberation and interest.

"Well, what do you say?" demanded Captain Cy.

"I don't care much for them kind of dogs," observed Asaph thoughtfully. "Good land! You don't s'pose they heave the dog in with the clothes for good measure, do you? Bailey, what's your opinion?"

Mr. Bangs looked wise.

"I should say," he said—"yes, sir, I should say that was a real stylish rig out. Only thing is that girl is consider'ble less fleshy than Emily. This one looks to me as if she was breakin' in two amidsips. Still, I s'pose likely the duds don't come ready made, so they could be let out some to fit. What's the price of a suit like that, Whit?"

"Afternoon gown for miss of sixteen," he read. "Humph! That settles that first crack. Bos'n ain't but half of sixteen."

"Anyway," put in Asaph, "you need somethin' she could wear forenoon if she wanted to. What's this one? She looks young enough."

The "one" referred to turned out to be a "coat for child of four." It was therefore scornfully rejected. One after another the different magazines were examined and the pictures discussed. At length a "costume for miss of eight years" was pronounced to be pretty nearly the thing.

"Godfrey scissors!" exclaimed the admiring Mr. Tiddit. "That's mighty swell, ain't it? What's the stuff goes into that, Cy?"

"Material, batiste, trimmed with embroidered batiste. What in time is batiste?"

"I don't know. Do you, Bailey?"

"No, never heard of it. Keturah never had nothin' like that, I'm sure. French, I shouldn't wonder. Well, Keturah's down on the French ever since she read about Napoleon leavin' his first wife to take up with another woman. Does it say any more?"

"Let's see. 'Makes a beautiful gown for evening or summer wear.' Summer! Why, by the big dipper, we're aground again! Bos'n don't want summer clothes. It's comin' on winter."

He threw the magazine on the floor, rubbed his forehead and then burst into a laugh.

"For goodness sake, don't tell anybody about this business, boys," he said. "I guess I must be havin' an early spring of second childhood. But when I heard those women at the meetin' house goin' on about how pretty Licia Atkins was got up and how mean and shabby Bos'n looked it made be bide. And, by the big dipper, I will show 'em somethin' afore I get through too! 'Ole dressin' little girls is some of my usual course. Bailey, does Keturah make her own duds?"

"Why, no! Course she helps and stands by for orders, but Effie Taylor comes and takes the wheel while the riggin's goin' on. Effie's a dressmaker and—"

"There! See, Ase? It is some good to have a married man aboard, after all. A dressmaker's what we want. I'll hunt up Effie tomorrow."

CHAPTER VIII.

AND HUNT UP A DRESSMAKER the captain did, with the result that Miss Taylor came to the Whittaker place each day during the following week, and Emily was, as the captain said, "rigged out fresh from main trunk to keelson." In this "rigging" Captain Cy and his two partners—Josiah Dimick had already christened the pair "the board of strategy"—took a marked interest. They were on hand when each new garment was tried on, and they approved or criticized as seemed to them best.

One Sunday Cyrus took the Bos'n for a long walk. On the horizon the sand hills of Wellmouth notched the blue sky. The girl drew a long breath.

"Oh," she exclaimed. "Isn't this just lovely? I do like the sea an awful lot."

"Say, Bos'n," he said a few minutes later, "I've been thinkin' about you. You've been to school, haven't you?"

"Course I have. 'I went two years in Concord. Mamma used to help me nights too. I can read almost all the little words. Don't I help you read your paper most every night?"

"Sartin' you do! Yes, yes! Well, our school opens tomorrow, and I've been thinkin' that maybe you'd better go. There's a new teacher comin', and I hear she's pretty good."

"Don't you know? Why, Mr. Tiddit said you was the one that got her to come here!"

"Yes, Well, Asaph says most everythin' but his prayers. Still, he ain't fur off this time. I callate I was some responsible for her bein' voted in. Yet I don't really know anything about her. You see, I— Well, never mind. What do you think? Want to go?"

Bos'n looked troubled.

"I'd like to," she said. "Course I want to learn how to read the big words too. But I like to stay at home with you more."

"You do, hey? Sho, sho! Well, I guess I can get along between times. Georgiana's there to keep me straight, and she'll see to the dust and the dishes."

The child thought for a moment.

"I think you're awful good," she said. "I like you next to mamma. Even better than Auntie Oliver."

Bos'n wandered off in search of late goldenrod. The captain smoked and

meditated. By and by the puffs were less frequent, and the cigar went out. It fell from his fingers. With his back against a pine tree Captain Cy dozed peacefully.

He awoke with a jump. Something had awakened him, but he did not know what. He blinked and gazed about him. Then he heard a faint scream.

"Uncle! screamed Bos'n. "O-o-o-h! Uncle Cyrus, help me! Come quick!"

The next moment the captain was plunging through the scrub of huckleberry and bayberry bushes, bumping into pines and smashing the branches aside as he ran in the direction of the call.

Back of the pine grove was a big in closed pasture nearly a quarter of a mile long. Its rear boundary was the iron fence of the cemetery. The other three sides were marked by rail fences and a stone wall. As the captain floundered from the grove and vaulted the rail fence he swore aloud.

"By the big dipper," he groaned, "it's that cussed heifer! I forgot her. Keep dodgin', Bos'n, girl! I'm comin'."

The pasture was tenanted by a red and white cow belonging to Sylvanus Cahoon. Whether or not the animal had during her calfhood days been injured by a woman is not known. Possibly her behavior was due merely to innate depravity. At any rate, she cherished a mortal hatred toward human beings of her own sex. With men and boys she was meek enough, but no person wearing skirts and alone might venture in that field without being chased by that cow. What would happen if the pursued one was caught only be surmised, for so far no female had permitted herself to be caught. Few would come even so near as the other side of the pasture walls.

Bos'n had forgotten the cow. She had gone from one goldenrod clump to another until she had traversed nearly

the length of the field. Then the vicious creature had appeared from behind a knoll in the pasture and, head down and bellowing wickedly, had rushed upon her. When the captain reached the faroff fence the little girl was dodging from one dwarf pine to the next with the cow in pursuit. The pines were few, and Bos'n was nearly at the end of her defenses.

"Help!" she screamed. "Oh, uncle, where are you? What shall I do?"

Captain Cy roared in answer.

"Keep it up!" he yelled. "I'm a-comin'! Sho, you everlastin' critter! I'll break your back for you!"

The cow didn't understand English. It seemed, even such vigorous English as the captain was using. Emily dodged to the last pine. The animal was close upon her. Her rescuer was still far away.

And then the cemetery gate opened and another person entered the pasture—a small person, a woman. She said nothing, but, picking up her skirts, ran straight toward the cow, heedless of the latter's reputation and vicious appearance. One hand clutched the gathered skirts; in the other she held a book.

"Don't be scared, dear," she called reassuringly, then to the cow: "Stop it! Go away, you wicked thing!"

The animal heard the voice and turned. Seeing that the newcomer was only a woman, she lowered her head and pawed the ground.

"Run for the gate, little girl!" commanded the rescuer. "Run quick!"

Bos'n obeyed. She made a desperate dash from her pine across the open space and in another moment was safe inside the cemetery fence.

"Seat! Go home!" ordered the lady, advancing toward the cow and shaking the book at her as if the volume was some sort of deadly weapon.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Go away! You needn't growl at me! I'm not a bit afraid of you!"

The "growling" was the muttered bellow with which the cow was wont to terrify her feminine victims. But this victim refused to be terrorized. Instead of screaming and running, she continued to advance, brandishing the book and repeating her orders that the creature "go home" at once. The cow did not know what to make of it. Before she could decide whether to charge or retreat a good sized stick descended upon her back with a "whack" that settled the question. Captain Cy had reached the scene of battle.

Then the rescuer's courage seemed to desert her, for she ran back to the cemetery even faster than she had run from it. When the indignant captain, having pursued and chastised the cow until the stick was but a splintered remnant, reached the haven behind the iron fence he found her sobbing and hysterical.

(Continued next week.)

NOT A BAD MATCH

By DON LA GRANGE.

One day the good Deacon Pennybone, of the village of Delhi, found it necessary to drive over to the village of Wharton, six miles away. He was hitching up his horse and buggy when Mrs. Hannah Savage came to the house to say:

"Deacon, they say you are going to drive over to Wharton today?"

"Yes, I am," was the reply.

"Got a load?"

"Only a jug to be filled with tie."

"You know my sister Sarah lives over there?"

"Yes, guess she do, though I hain't much of a hand to keep track of folks' sisters."

"Well, Sarah's got a baby a year old, and she writes me that it can't walk yet. Somethin' seems to be the matter with his knees or back."

"It sure orter be walkin' at a year old. They say I wasn't quite ten months old when I could trot right out doors. Do you want to send any word to Sarah?"

"I want to drive over and back with you."

"All right. You be ready in fifteen minutes. Guess the old mare can take us both and not get tuckered out."

Deacon Pennybone was a widower. Hannah Savage was a widow.

They had both lived in Delhi for years, and both belonged to the same church, but gossip had never even hinted a marriage between them. It had never hinted that either one of them would marry again.

The drive to Wharton was made. The deacon went to get his jug filled with oil, and the widow to see her sister and the baby. The baby was walking all right. The next day its walkless condition it had got choked on a spool of thread and been shook and dangled head downwards with vigorous hand! Ten minutes later it was taking its first steps.

The drive out and back was pleasant. The widower and widow talked about the new spire for the meeting house that was going to be erected—the death of Silas White's cow—the plentitude of potato-bugs—the success of the late Sunday school picnic and even the best way of killing off burdocks so they would stay killed, but not a word nor a hint of anything closer. They were just neighbors. If the subject of the heaten of Africa had been brought up they might have discussed it for miles to the exclusion of all else.

The deacon's sister was his housekeeper. She was a sour-faced old maid with a sharp tongue, and when her brother got back home she felt it her duty to say somethin' she therefore remarked:

"I suppose the match was at least half-made today?"

"What match?" asked the deacon.

"She's been tryin' to catch a man for the last five years."

"Ruth, who you talkin' about?"

"Why, the widow Savage."

"What's wrong with her?"

"She'd like to change her name to Pennybone!"

"Say, now," replied the deacon as he fired up, "you quit talkin' that way! She hain't the slightest idea of it. If she has I hain't."

"All widows want to marry again," said the sister.

"Then let 'em marry, but none of 'em will marry me!"

When the widow Savage got home Mrs. Goodhue, a neighbor, dropped in to ask about the baby over at Wharton that couldn't walk. She was given full information, and then she remarked:

"Lots of folks thought it funny."

"What was?"

"Your ridin' over there with Deacon Pennybone."

"But I don't see anything funny about that."

"Well, you hadn't been gone half an hour when the story was around that you and the deacon had gone away to get married."

"Upon my soul! The deacon and me get married! Why, he don't want me, and I don't want him. If the fool-killer would come along he'd find plenty to do in this town!"

"Then—then—"

"What a curious thing is human nature! Here were two people who were neighbors and friends—nothing more. They hadn't thought of each other once a week, unless happening to meet. But now, because a sour-tempered old maid and a gossip neighbor made a few remarks they began thinkin' of each other."

"By gosh!" said the deacon to himself as he sat down to milk the cow that evening, "the widow Savage wouldn't be such a bad match if a feller wanted to marry agin. She's purty good lookin' when she's got her Sunday duds on, and she can talk like a streak and talk sense too. I've heard she was a savin' woman, and had money in the bank."

And as the widow Savage cleared away her supper dishes she smiled and mused:

"So they thought the deacon and me were going to elope and get married! Um! Guess he'd be the last man I'd think of, though I will say for him that he's good-tempered and upright. He pays his debts and never says anything mean of anybody. If I wanted to get married again, which I don't and the deacon wanted to get married again, which he don't—why—why—"

It is highly probable that the deacon did some more thinking, as in

more information. Then she had crept away like a stricken creature, trying to realize the horror of the situation. Brill had been arrested—"caught with the goods!" Like a lightning flash came the recollection of her words to him that morning: "You can beg, borrow, or steal the money—I must have it!" It was her own fault. She had driven Brill into crime, and the law had claimed him.

Up and down the spaces of her lonely apartment Rose paced, wringing her hands in impotent misery. At times she told herself it could not be true; then the sickening certainty gripped her. Brill had not appeared; the dinner hour had passed; no word had been sent to her. At last, in a nervous panic, she put on her hat and hurried down town. She must know the worst.

As she stumbled up the steps of Brownell Mack company's office she saw that there were lights burning within, and men moving about. An official stopped her at the gate. She had never been there before and she was unknown.

"Is Mr. Sibert here—yet?" she asked faintly. Then, scarcely knowing what she was doing, she pushed her way into the office. A man's face peered at her from behind a little wicket gate, and a voice called her name.

"Rose! What are you doing here?" Her husband was walking toward her; and, with a low cry, Rose flung herself into his arms and clung to him, shaking convulsively.

"Brill! Brill, what have you done? I heard—oh, they shan't take you away! It's all my fault!"

"Rose, Rose, be quiet. I'm all right. I telephoned to the drug store. Didn't you get my message?"

His tone more than his words calmed her. She awayed back, and regarded him with beseeching eyes.

"Isn't it true, Brill?" she whispered, aware now of the presence of others. "Wasn't it you? I didn't get any word; but I heard—I thought—wasn't somebody arrested? The cashier?"